



Team-mates with an age gap of 77 years!

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It is said table tennis is a sport for all, for life – and one team in the Hastings & District League certainly proved that.

The Tackleway G side which faced Nalگو B in Division 3 recently included players at different ends of the age spectrum.

Lining up on the same side of the net were 88-year-old Mike Lushington and 11-year-old Thomas Porter – an age difference of 77 years.

Thomas, the grandson of Tackleway's secretary and Hastings & District Table Tennis Association president Keith Lindsay, has been playing for around three years.

However, Mike is also a relatively recent convert to the sport – he played at school and during his Army days but had not played seriously between 1951 and 2014, when he came back to the sport.

He also had to take a break since then in order to have knee replacement surgery, and has only recently begun to play in the league again.

He said: "It's a delight to be able to get back into table tennis, it's a cracking sport – it's competitive, requires a lot of skill and the people I've been playing with have been so helpful. The standard in the league is phenomenal."

Both players are full of praise for each other.

Mike said: "Thomas is very good. Being a hard-hitter at that age, he can be a bit erratic and you can outsmart him a little but he's definitely one for the future. He has power and a nice little service.

"I noticed one of his opponents in the match was good on defence but not so strong on attack, so I told Thomas to hold back his attack until he was ready. He did and almost straight away he won a game. It shows what you

can do with a good team ethic.”

Thomas is also not fazed having a team-mate of advanced years and said he aims to still be playing when he is 88.

He added: “It’s my first year in the league and I was a bit nervous at first but as I started to get into it, I was fine.

“Mike is there to talk to you about the match and he’s good at encouraging.”

“Table tennis is a game for everyone of all ages and ability and it’s good for fitness and flexibility.”

The team-mates have so far only played the one match together, but they did recently play against each other during a club night, with youth coming out on top.

Mike said: “He beat me in the end but it was quite close. Of course, he’s much quicker about the floor than me – I can’t move like him!”

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